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Ain't I A Woman?

25¢

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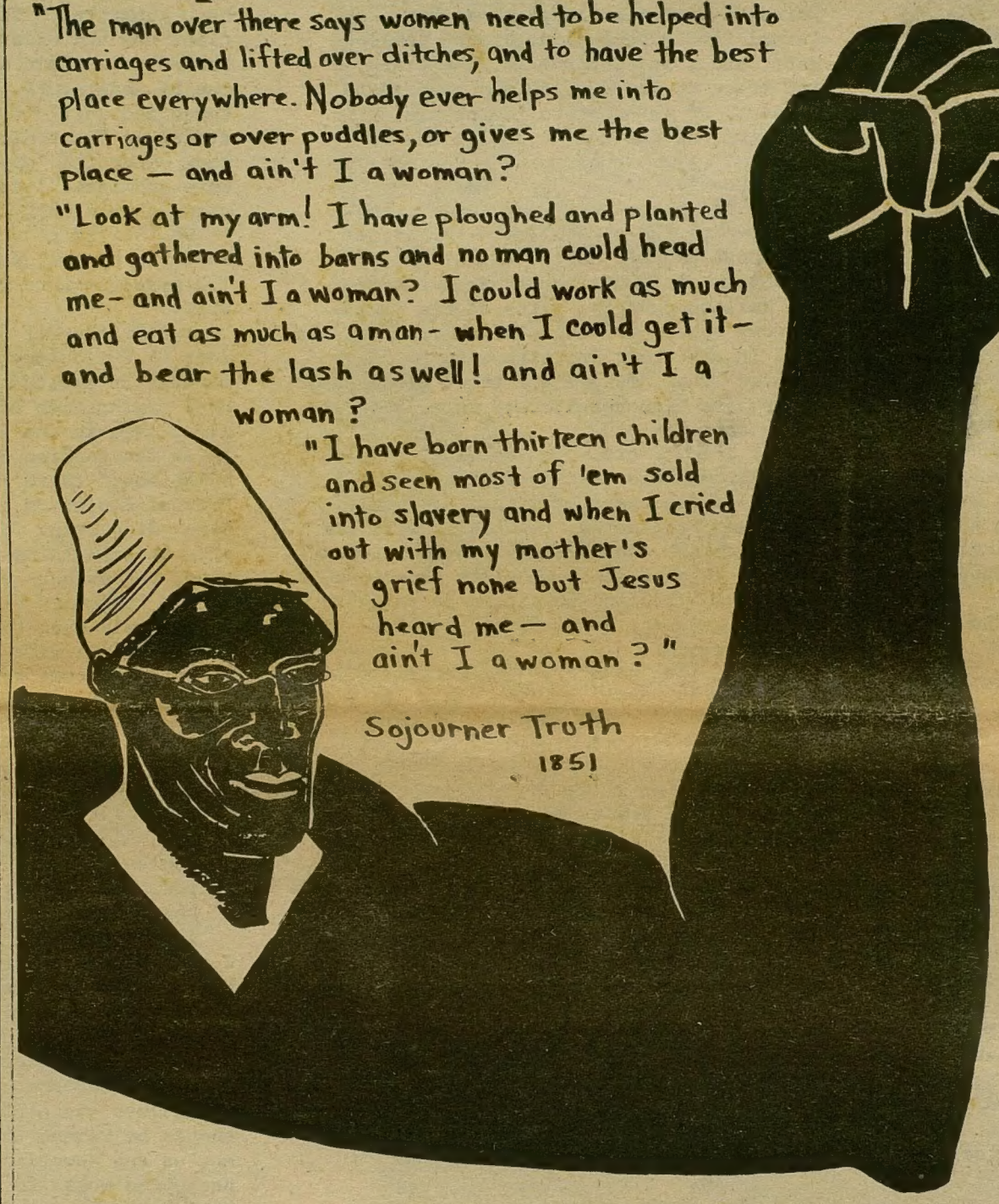
"The man over there says women need to be helped into carriages and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages or over puddles, or gives me the best place — and ain't I a woman?

"Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted and gathered into barns and no man could head me - and ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well! and ain't I a woman?

"I have born thirteen children and seen most of 'em sold into slavery and when I cried out with my mother's grief none but Jesus heard me — and ain't I a woman?"

Sojourner Truth
1851



Ain't I a Woman!

25¢

A MIDWEST NEWSPAPER OF WOMEN'S LIBERATION
Volume I No. 1 June 26, 1970
PUBLISHED BY THE PUBLICATIONS COLLECTIVE, IOWA CITY WIT

STARTING 3rd BIG YEAR!
STILL TOPS IN THE MIDWEST
WITH A FEW STEADFAST QUEERS
AND ASSORTED OTHERS

The Doctor is instructed to mess you over !

There are several gynecological textbooks recommended to University of Iowa medical students; one of them is Novak's Textbook of Gynecology (Seventh Edition), Edmund R. Novak, Georgeanna Seegar Jones and Howard W. Jones, Jr. (1965). In the "Preface to the Seventh Edition," the authors conclude the usual explanatory bullshit with these kind words, "...without Miss Helen Clayton in the office, and Miss Eva Hildebrandt in the laboratory, this textbook could never have gone into print, and these truly indespensable ladies are formally given our humble thanks."

Oh wow. I really think Eva and Helen should have joined up with Georgeanna and stopped the presses altogether. Or at least stolen the proofs and given them to the New England Free Press.

This 736-page, $16 volume is jammed with all that secret information gynecologists will never divulge to the lowly patient. I started reading Novak's Gynecology voraciously, first glancing at the chapter titles, that the male medical student who owned the book had helpfully highlighted in sunshine yellow:

Gynecological History, Examination and Operations
Diseases of the Vulva
Diseases of the Vagina
Cervicitis and Cervical Polyp
Carcinoma of the Cervix
Myoma of the Uterus
Ectopic Pregnancy
Leukorrhea
Amenorrhea
Management (?!) of Menopause
Miscellaneous Problems of Gynecology

I won't list them all; you can well imagine that I barely knew where to turn first. Actually, the first chapter I read was none of the above, but one on Hermaphroditism -- fascinating in a genuine truth-is-stranger-than-fiction way.

Hermaphroditism has to do with sex identification; it occurs when there are abnormal numbers of chromosomes and/or structural abnormalities of individual chromosomes.Male or female hermaphroditism is possible, with either virilization or feminization. For example, a male hermaphrodite with feminization may have external female genetalia, breast development, etc., but internallu, the uterus and tubes do not develop and testes are present. Of interest to the physician is "helping the patient adjust to the sex of rearing," i.e., constructing vaginas where possible.

The first chapter, "Anatomy," introduced me to the vocabulary -- I learned all about Skene's ducts, the glands of Bartholin, the ganglion of Frankenhauser, and Mullerian ducts, parts of the female anatomy named, no doubt, after men, because men, in all their infinite wisdom, "discovered" them. Before all those glands and ducts were discovered, they weren't officially there.

The chapter titled "Gynecological History, Examination and Operations" was when I started getting angry. Up until now I was fascinated, especially with the illustrations, which I'll discuss later. In this chapter the real class consciousness of the budding physicain is reinforced. The section on "patient's Complaint" reads:

> The general nature of the patient's complaint should be ascertained at the beginning of the consultation, and should be stated as nearly as possible in the patient's own language. This may not always be very precise, or even literate, but will at least be authentic and will often point the way to later questioning.

This incredibly condescending attitude towards the use of everyday language to explain what a woman must know is an important Philosophy of Gynecologists. We've all seen it -- the Great Cool Dude Gynecologist as Guardian of All Secret Information -- if the man can't throw in reference to Skene's ducts and Mullerian glands, it isn't official and therefore not "literate."

Next is a section on "past History" which ties in with all of the above, "it is remarkable how little women know as to the nature of operations to which they have submitted." Of course, now it becomes clear how the Great Doctor has utterly failed to explain anything in terms that can be understood, has intimidated and dehumanized until we have the conclusion stated in "Past History." Why don't women know about the "operations to which they have submitted"? Because of the pig physician, that's why.

Oh, but wait. I know you're really seething by now, ready to go string up all the gynecologists you've ever known -- but wait.

Here's Chapter 34, "Miscellaneous Problems of Gynecology," in which the medical student is treated to a thoroughly medieval explanation of sexuality in marriage, right here in the 20th century.

In the section on "The Premarital Consultation," there is the subheading, "Sexual Education and Hygiene" (hygiene?). After discussing the efficacy of visual aids in explaining the missionary position, the authors point out that,

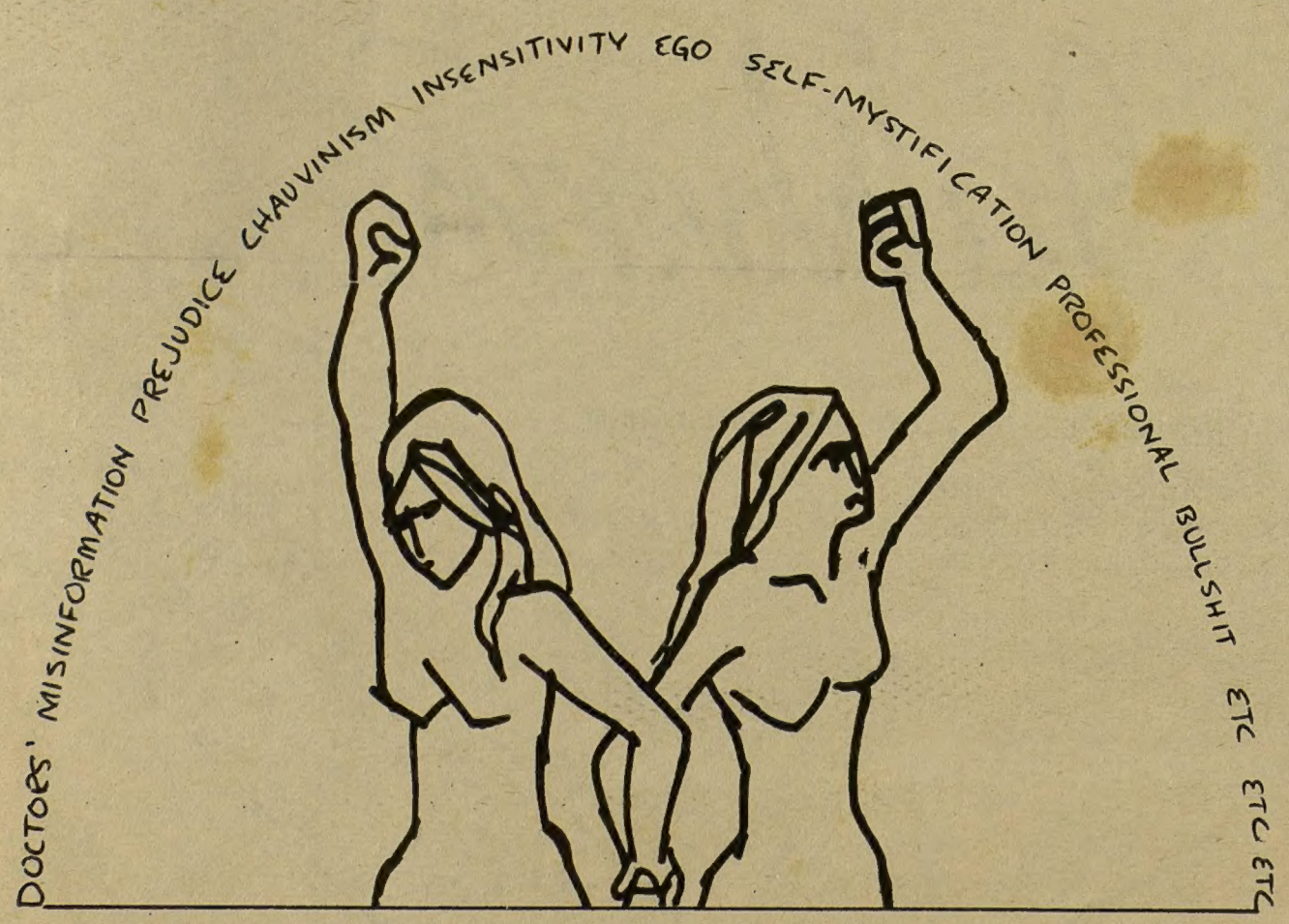
> The frequency of intercourse depends entirely upon the male sex drive and there is a wide divergence of normal--varying from two to three times in 24 hours, for the newly married couple, to once or twice a week...The bride should be advised to allow her husband's sex drive to set their pace and she should attempt to gear (like a machine??) hers satisfactorily to his. If she finds after several months or years that this is not possible, she is advised to consult her physician as soon as she realizes there is a real problem.

I always knew doctors fucked women over, but I never realized they studied it formally in medical school. Truly sick psychological and physical dependency on the husband is fostered, and if that doesn't work, dependency on the physician -- an endless cycle of fuck-ups. Plus: ".she should be warned that it may take 3 to 6 months and sometimes longer for the inexperienced woman to develop a complete orgasm." Not one word on masturbation.

The illustrations are of three types: 1) microscopic, 2) photographs of removed tumors, cysts and cancers and 3) full-color pictures of real women. In the acknowledgements, profuse thanks go to the doctors who procured these pictures, but not one word of appreciation to the women who are in them. About half of the women are black-- (in one illustration, the authors found it necessary to identify the raised thighs as those of "a colored woman, 45 years of age," presumably because her skin was darker than the rest).

I felt such sadness and sympathy for these women-- probably poor, who couldn't get to a doctor until they had incredible diseases, such as carcinoma of the vulva, horrible things that merited a photograph in a gynecological textbook.

After reading Novak's I realized even more strongly that women must join together to help each other about their bodies and their health. As long as medical schools educate doctors with textbooks like Novak's, women must be made aware that blind dependency on a gynecologist only leads to self-destruction. And that any dealings with a male gynecologist must be undertaken with extreme caution.


DOCTORS' MISINFORMATION PREJUDICE CHAUVINISM INSENSITIVITY EGO SELF-MYSTIFICATION PROFESSIONAL BULLSHIT ETC ETC ETC

THE JANUARY PAPERS

I wrote the first draft
of a novel called The January Papers.
It was about varieties of self-love:
suicide, ambition and sex.
It was about the inability to relate
to people without needing them,
about trapped women,
about male and lethal art.
It was about repetition
and the making of family myths,
about moving from place to place,
about politics and revolution.
It was about the number of pages
I've filled with thirty years of waste --
my own and other people's --
trying to make sense of what's
happened to me and what I've done.
It was about words and how
they were going to kill me.
It was about how January
was the dead of winter,
but could also be a beginning.
It was about the oppressed emotions:
about fear and anger.

A friend read the draft
and developed a headache,
but I still didn't know how
sick-ening the manuscript was
until I tried to rewrite it.
When I say I destroyed The January Papers
that is an example of words
trying to kill me.
I was going to burn it,
but it was easier to throw it in a pail.
I wrote this poem before the act of disposal
because I want words to serve me
better than they have.

I have been crazy
and though it frightened me,
it once seemed like the only
sensible thing to do.
Even now I am tempted to be
a little grandiose.
But this time I will let simple words
describing the daily act of
throwing out the garbage
be sufficient.

photo by June Smith
poems by Iago

DEADLINES

(for Alfonsina Storni 1892-1938)

Yesterday I learned of another poet
dead by her own hand.

For panicky moments I choked her
into a locket with other
writers and suicides
who hang at my throat.

Though this is dangerous ground for me
I'm not here from old obsessions,
but because too many of us
are lost from death cuddling,
and perhaps I can encourage
plagued sisters
not to be their own executioners,
not to give blood in a ghoulish society,

to have accidents, if necessary.

From the frozen skull
that was yesterday's fear,
from being fucked
over
and over and over,
I conceive
an unwanted, cancerous hate,
a tumor in my gentleness,
that knows at last
which end of the weapon
to sight along.

RAVI, WHERE IS THE MUSIC

for 200,00 moslem women
who gave their bodies
for Bangladesh?

200,000 women
wounded in a war of liberation.
200,000 semen soaked victims
of their husbands' sensibilities.
200,000 prisoners of peace

who are not avenged,
comforted or honored
by words which are not more
than an inky monument
of a woman
with her dress over her head
and an inscription
on her belly and thighs:

Here lies and lies and lies Bangladesh.

a woman?

VIETNAM: a feminist analysis

A year and a half ago there was a struggle between parts of the women's movement and a newly emerging anti-imperialist women's movement. AIAW was strongly opposed to the emergence of separate women's groups organized to work to end the war. Surfacely, it was cooptive. The anti-imperialist women's movement was organizing women to work for the anti-war movement within structures set up by men, for goals defined by the male left, and under a radical ideology limited by the fact that it was developed by white males.

On a more personal gut level, we felt cheated. The anti-imperialist women's movement had a limited analysis and therefore a limited vision of what a just society should be: they didn't deal with the position of Blacks, women, working-class people or lesbians in this society. They were women against the war who were often feminist; we were feminists who considered anti-imperialism integral to our analysis.

We received from the Women's Liberation Library Collective of Cambridge, Mass. this speech against the war given by a women at a Boston Anti-war rally. After fighting to be able to speak she was allowed to. We think her analysis is important in uncovering the roots of imperialist behavior both at home and abroad of white males in this country.

We heard from the Library Collective that another radical feminist paper, The Furies, refused to print this speech because they 'don't want to encourage women to do anti-war work.' We can see where women who have come to see the limitations of the anti-imperialist women's movement could take such a stand. However, the content of such a statement is racist and condescending when coming from citizens of the country which is waging an imperialist and genocidal war on Viet Nam. We printed the article because we feel the issue of anti-imperialism integral to a feminist analysis.

As mother country radicals we have a responsibility to make sure we don't become too short sighted in our analysis. What we believe to be the correct political strategy for women in this country has often run counter to the interests of the third world. Other minority groups are less prone to this than women are. They have a similar status within this country as their brothers and sisters in the third world; they are colonized and ghettoized inside the US. Women's status is much less definite. We don't have a distinct race or class connection with the third world. We are more prone to be reactionary in relation to the third world and therefore have to be even more careful in examining our politics.

I am speaking today about the politics of rape. There is a national phenomenon in this country that promotes myths about sex and violence that are recreated in imperialist wars against Third World countries. Rape is an act of aggression in which the victim is denied her self determination. It is an act of violence which always carries with it the threat of death. And finally, rape, is a form of mass terrorism, for the victims of rape are chosen indiscriminately, but our male dominated culture tells us that it is women who cause rape by being immoral or in the wrong place at the wrong time--in essence, by behaving as though we were free.

For years the male theorists of the anti-war movement have spoken about the reasons America is involved in Vietnam: the imperialist search for profits in the war in Vietnam, and the American corporate need for a war to maintain a stable domestic economy.

This analysis of the war, while correct, has never gone far enough. It has been unable to explain the unprecedented sadism which is the overriding characteristic of this war. What is the rationale for the obsession we find in the universites, corporations, and military institutions of Amerika with increasingly hideous and perverse methods of torture and death as applied to the people of another race and land.

Through the years, scientists and professors have been inventing things like flechette pellets--tiny steel arrows with larger fins at one end--which enter the body enlarging the wound and lodge in the blood vessels--they're designed to shred the internal organs; white phosphrus, a more sophistecated version of napalm, that usually has to burn its way down to the bone before going out. The area denial program where they flood whole areas with hundreds and thousands of mines designed to look like leaves or animal droppings and to make the area totally uninhabitable for humans. Thousands of square miles of territory in Indochina are now flooded with little mines which are manufactured for the sole purpose of blowing off a foot. They can't blow up a truck or anything else; they are only designed to make living impossible. While white white-collar boys sit in their labs inventing these atrocities, the army recruits from it's male youth the manpower to prove the potency of it's weaponry on the battlefield.

The result is Total War, primarily against the civilian population. The civilians are usually the ones that are in and around the villages; they can't keep on the move all the time because they have families & belongings and homes. They are the ones who signal the weapons, the ones who are the main casualties.

A 23 month old baby is senselessly electro-shocked into unconsciousness.

Where does this come from in the American psyche? These perversions are the products of the mentality of rape. The mentality that produces the kind of war they continue to fight starts at home. Let's run down a few unknown facts about rape--about male sexual violence.

Susan Griffin in an article called "The Politics Of Rape" found that official crime statistics tell women: forcible rape is the most frequently committed violent crime in AmeriKa.

Now let's once and for all smash the white male propaganda that says most crimes of rape are committed by black men on white women. Historically and statistically this is a lie. 90% of all incidences of rape do not cross racial lines--these crimes of sexual violence are usually committed by men against women of their own race.

Another myth: the rapist is a lonely creep who sees a woman without male protection and is suddenly overpowered by his innate craving for sex. BULLSHIT.

83% of rapes by men in two's are premeditated.

90% of all group rapes are premeditated.

58% of single rapes are premeditated. Rape is not a crime of passion; it is an act of aggression. An undeclared war against women.

Another myth: that men who rape women are pathological, as distinct from your basic average run of the mill male. Amir's study called "Patterns In Forcible Rape" says men who rape are not abnormal. Amir writes "studies indicate that SEX OFFENDERS DO NOT CONSTITUTE A UNIQUE OR PSYCHOPATHOLOGICAL TYPE; nor are they as a group invariably more disturbed than the control groups to which they are compared." Allen Taylor -- a parole officer who has worked with rapists in prison facilities stated the question in plainer language: "Those men were the most normal men there. They has a lot of hangups, but they were the same hangups that men walking out on the street have."

Let's just examine two more aspects of rape--keeping in mind that all these things about rape are symptoms of a male dominated culture which feeds on the combination of sex and violence. The myth that some men protect you and some men rape you is false. First of all, the rapist is an average man. But secondly every man in this society gets male benefits from the existence of rape. These armchair rapists have their potency and masculinity vicariously confirmed thru rape--witness the number of pages given over to violent sex crimes in men's adventure magazines.

Another way all men have their power enhanced by rape, is the need they put into women for protection--the ancient chivalry rackets, men protecting women from other men. It's not unlike the protection relationship which the mafia establishes with small businesses.

And finally, it is a fact that the most excessive degrees of violence occur in group rape. Far from discouraging or curbing violence upon women, the presence of other men may in fact encourage sadism, and even cause the behavior. Men egg each other on ...

What does all this have to do with Vietnam?

What starts as the socialization of male sexual violence in this culture is used by corporate and military interests to train a vicious, killing army--in the labs and on the battlefields. Examples of the inseperability of sex and violence in the male are endless. In basic training the following chant is used to teach the distinction between a rifle, which is a weapon, and a gun, which is a cock. "This is my rifle, this is my gun. One is for killing,

one is for fun." With such training it is not surprising that a major in Vietnam is quoted as saying "Don't let the news media fool you. These kids are maybe 18 or 19 - but they are beautiful killers - just beautiful."

What is routine conduct at home is routine conduct abroad. Acts of male domination and violence are the cornerstones of society in the United States. Here in the states we are torn with conflicts of race, class and sex. When we transport these conflicts overseas they show up in the army, in the highest echelons of the Thieu government, and in the destruction of culture in Saigon. AND UNDERPINNING IT ALL IS THE ASSUMPTION OF AMERICA'S ABSOLUTE right TO RULE WHERE AMERICA WILL.

The passion with which we perpetuate this war: war crimes no longer war crimes but genocide; violence promoted to contain a war we have no hope of winning.

How else to explain this but by understanding the phenomena of male, sexual violence in Western culture. Germany in 1944 and 1945 was without hope of winning the war but none the less went on building bigger ovens and crueler technologies to destroy with.

It cannot be stated too strongly that: THE CRIMES OF VIOLENCE WE HAVE BEEN SHOCKED BY IN VIETNAM CAN ONLY HAVE BEEN CREATED AT HOME IN THE U.S. in a country which trains young men from birth to connect violence with sex. Ann Froines has written that the popular culture-magazines, movies, books - in South Vietnam now promotes a model soldier stripped of all human values or political understanding. He never talks about Vietnam in patriotic terms. He kills to survive, then seeks pleasure afterwards through sex. An integral part of this culture is the glorification of American "Natural instincts": sex, violence and the desire for money.

In a revolutionary society violence and domination are not what holds life together. In China or North Vietnam the whole society is being geared to create human values based on love and sharing--not based on greed and violence.

On May 8th Nixon announced he had mined 7 harbors in North Vietnam risking confrontations with the Soviet Union and China to preserve "American honor."

I.F. Stone said last week there is a possibility Nixon would finally use nuclear weapons to blow Vietnam to bits rather than be

caught with his pants down at the Moscow summit conference: Genocide of a whole people in order to save male face. THIS IS THE HEIGHT OF WAR INSANITY.

We are faced with an imperative. Without a feminist analysis we will never confront some of the deepest motivations behind the waging of aggressive wars.

The same men and power structure who victimize women are engaged in the act of raping Vietnam, raping Black people, and the very earth we live upon. Rape is a classic act of domination where the emotions of hatred, contempt, and the desire to break or violate personality takes place. This breaking of the personality characterizes modern life itself. No simple reforms can eliminate rape.

As the symbolic expression of the white male hierarchy, RAPE IS THE ULTIMATE ACT OF OUR CIVILIZATION, one which, Valerie Solanis warns, "is in danger of humping itself to death."

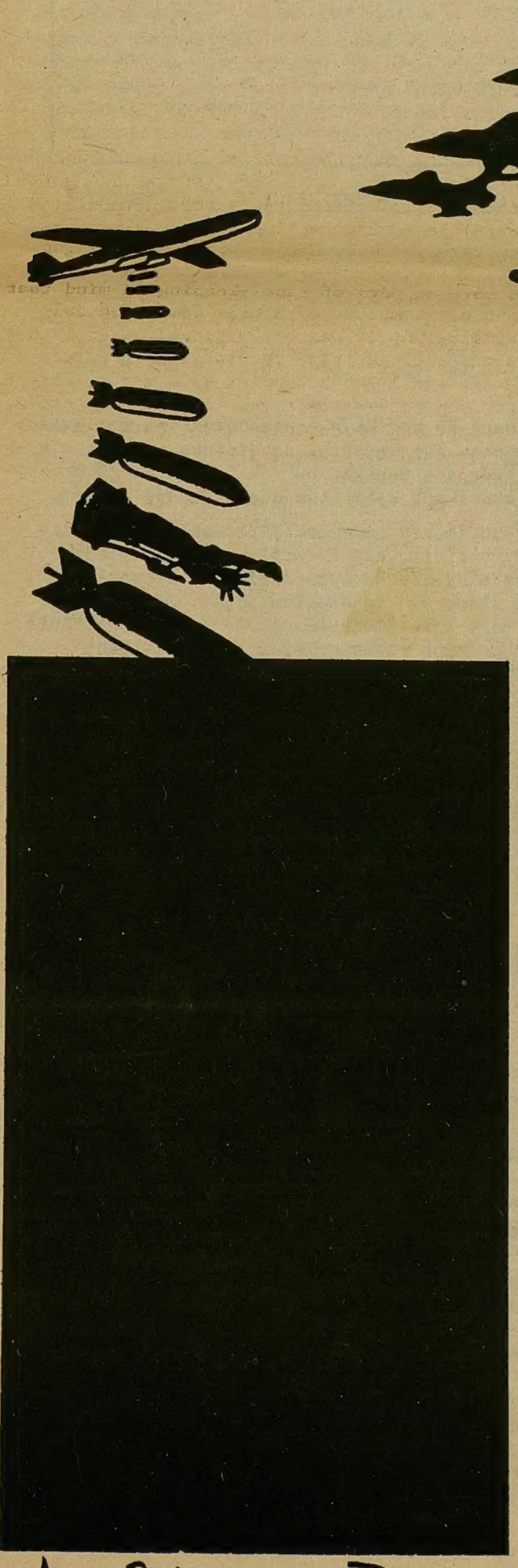
This speech was written by Lesbian Feminists

Hollibaugn, von Bretzel, Crichton, Lindbloom

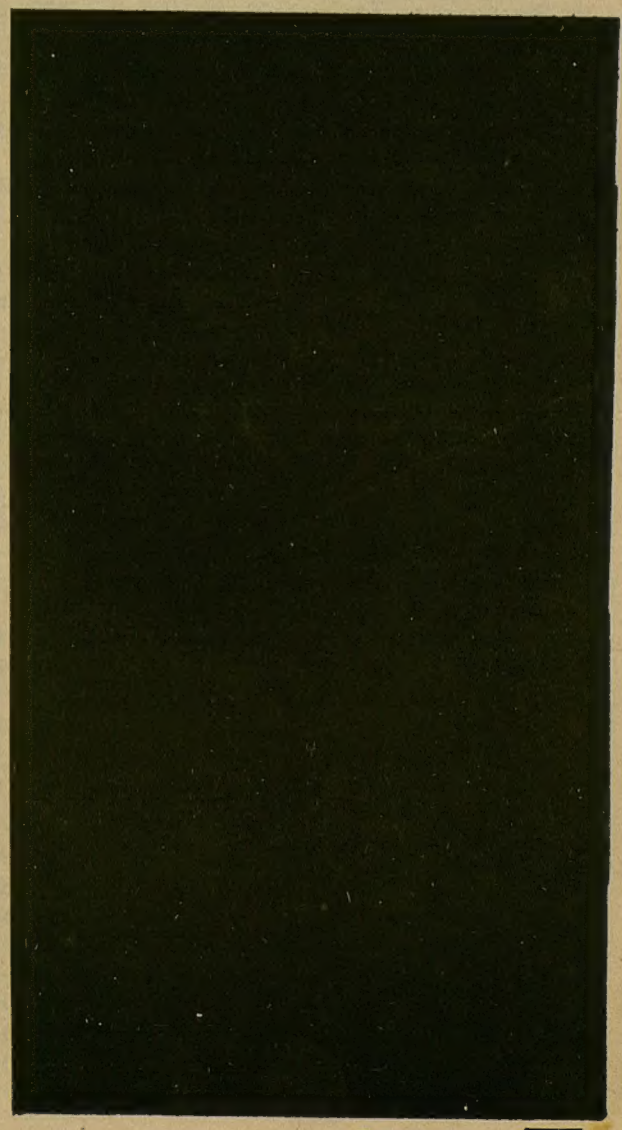
This speech was given on May 6th at a large anti-war rally in Boston.

All publicity prior to the rally listed an all-male roster of speakers. Women were contacted at the last minute and were then met with blatant sexism. A crowd-pleasing rock concert mentality was more than reluctant to put woman speakers on the platform. We were not announced until after many people had left and then only because women in the audience shouted for a woman speaker.

"The subject of feminism is very ordinary; it's the question of male domination that makes everybody angry."



I used to be bitter
'cause I was exploited:
for being a woman
for being gay
and for being fat;
Then I thought of American black women
who are also exploited:
for being women
for being gay, sometimes
and for being fat, sometimes
and for being black;
And I thought of southeast Asian women
who are also being exploited:
for being women
for being gay, if they are
for being fat, if they are
for being peasants-by the Americans
for being illiterate-by the Americans;
And I remembered more and more oppressed
women to add to the list,
I realized that as a white American woman
When the revolution starts I'll get killed
--But I'm not bitter about that.



ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CLASS TO THE

MARCH 19

by RADICAL FEMI

This article is written for women who are committed to building a Feminist Revolution. We believe that an analysis of Class is basic to any attempt to mobilize women to overthrow patriarchy. Real unity among women will come only from a complete understanding of the divisions among us. We can be unified only through concrete political goals, not by a mere wish to identify with all women. This paper is our first attempt to consolidate our ideas on the significance of class. Rather than attempting to categorize individuals or groups of women, our emphasis will be to discover why economic class is a vital Feminist issue. We will discuss both the ideological base of different classes and the potential each class has for effecting real revolutionary change.

WHAT DETERMINES A PERSON'S CLASS IDENTITY?

The words "working class women" and "middle class women" are used frequently in discussions without being defined. Consequently, so much time and energy are spent discussing whether or not a woman is middle class that we never get to the heart of the matter: what significance does class have to the revolutionary Feminist movement.

Before we are able to develop an analysis of class, we must have some definition of the terms "working class woman" and "middle class woman." Therefore, the primary reason for determining class identity is the purpose of definition.

In searching for definitions, our discussions continually became enmeshed in gray areas between classes. Though we knew that there was in fact a middle class and a working class, there was no place to draw a line. After much consideration, we came up with three criteria which we believe significantly distinguish the material base of class. Individual women do not fall neatly into one category or another and this definition is not an attempt to draw a clear cut line. A woman may have different aspects from different classes.

> Generally, a working class woman is one who works to support herself and/or her family, who depends upon her own income to this end, and who has no options to fall back on for financial support, such as family identification, husband, or other benefactors.

The three primary factors that determine a person's class identity are:

1. THE WORK SHE DOES:
   The bulk of work working class women do is service, factory, or office work, most often low-paying and with little hope for advancement. If she has a family, she must work two jobs: one in her home and one in the labor force. Work is a necessity for her, not an option. The bulk of work middle class women do is managerial, professional, or volunteer. For middle class women, their work is not a material necessity but an attempt to achieve fulfillment or escape boredom under the illusion that somehow their jobs are beneficial to the world.

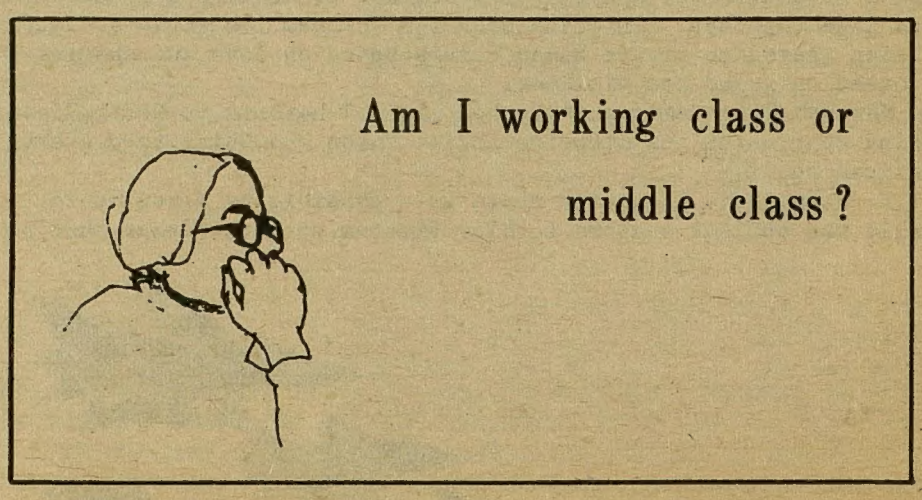
2. HER BACKGROUND:
   The working class background: A woman growing up in a working class family knows what it is like to have material needs. Her labor power is important from the time she is small, and often she begins supporting herself while still in her teens. Schools and parents try to channel her into learning practical skills for survival such as home-ec and secretarial skills, rather than college-prep courses. If she rebels against this, she learns no skills and must work at the lowest-paying, non-skilled jobs or resort to prostitution. If she aspires and goes on to college, she finds it a constant struggle. Because she lacks the right contacts, she has great difficulty learning about loans and scholarships and receives little help finding employment after graduation.

   The middle class background: A woman growing up in a middle class family learns the skills necessary to "make it" in the system. She learns the proper ways of speaking and relating to people. She develops self-confidence through the security of her social environment. She is assured of a college education, learns what is expected of her, and is promised a social position. She has the luxury of sampling the latest fads, experimenting with different life-styles, or doing things just for the experience, because she knows that she can always get money from her parents if she needs it. When she takes a low-paying job, it is temporary because she has the skills, contacts and education to either find another job or to align herself with a middle class man.

3. HER RELATIONSHIP WITH MEN:
   This is the most important determinant of class identity. The economic class system is a hierarchy of power among men. A woman's class identity is determined by her relationship to men: first by her father, later by her husband. The higher up her man is in the class hierarchy the more she benefits from the system. The wife of a middle class man need not work for her survival outside of her home because she is provided for by her husband. She is economically dependent on him. The wife of a working class man is forced to be economically dependent upon herself. The family cannot make ends meet on the husband's income alone.

   The single woman is obviously working class (ignoring a few token exceptions) because women are the lowest paid workers. Any woman who is economically self-dependent rather than male-dependent lives in the material reality of the working class regardless of her background.

To conclude, the most general definition of a working class woman is one who is economically self-dependent.



WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CLASS IN THE REVOLUTIONARY FEMINIST STRUGGLE?

A patriarchal society is by nature a class society based on a hierarchy of power. Any revolution, by definition, attempts to overthrow those in control of the class system: those on top of the hierarchy who oppress the vast majority of people. Any revolutionary movement must organize sufficient political, economic, and military power to overthrow the oppressors and seize power from them.

All social groups or classes do not have equal potential for building a revolutionary movement. The material conditions of people's lives determine whether they are capable of taking the risks necessary to destroy the old order and establish a new social system.

The composition of a revolutionary movement determines the nature of the post-revolutionary society that it will build. If the revolution in America were made by the new professionals it would reflect the professional's class and ideological bias. If the revolution were made by the male intellectuals, it would reflect their bias. If it were made by working class males it would reflect theirs and if it were made by women it would reflect ours. Each group would make a qualitatively different type of revoltuion because each group would act in its own self interest.

Our goal as revolutionary Feminists is to further the revolution which will overthrow patriarchy and will insure power for all women. We believe that this requires the destruction of the basis of the class system -- the institution of marriage. (For more explanation see "On Social Change" by RF28 and "The Document: a Declaration of Feminism." Both are available through our P.O. box.)

Only women organized in thier own self interest can create a revolution that will insure power for women and only working class women have the potential for creating a revolutionary movement which will attack the institution of marriage and thus the essence of the class system. This is true for two reasons: first, only working class women have the potential for organizing and leading the Feminist Revolution and second, only working class women have the ideological base (world outlook) necessary to bring about a classless Feminist State.

We are attempting to explain why we believe that the leadership of the Revolutionary Feminist movement must, by definition, be working class and why middle class women who wish to build this revolutionary movement must overcome their middle class prejudices and adopt a working class world perspective. The rest of this discussion is devoted to analyzing why we believe this to be true.

Because we are concerned with Feminist Revolution we are limiting our discussion to the potential of WOMEN to organize and because we do not believe that those who benefit most from the existing system will rise up to overthrow it we are not considering the revolutionary potential or the ideology of ruling class women. This discussion compares and analyzes the differences between middle and working class women. We are totally leaving out the role of alliances, the relationship between Feminists and other oppressed groups, etc. We believe these questions are secondary to the creation of a Revolutionary Feminist Movement led by working class women.

IE REVOLUTIONARY FEMINIST MOVEMENT

CH 1972

FEMINISTS 28

I. REVOLUTIONARY POTENTIAL

The revolutionary potential of a group or class within a society can be measured by two criteria: first, the degree to which the class or group benefits from the system as it exists and second, the amount of political, economic, and military power the group is capable of organizing in order to threaten the power of their oppressors.

A. BENEFITS

Hypothesis: Working class women benefit least from the system as it exists and are therefore the group with the greatest revolutionary potential.

While middle class women enjoy a degree of economic and social security from their marriages, marriage for the working class woman is primarily an added burden to her economic self-dependency. The working class woman who is married holds down two jobs: one at home and one at work. Her paid employment is essential for the survival of her family as is her work of homekeeper, wife, and mother. The promise of being supported by a man in marriage, if it ever meant something to her, means nothing once she finds herself with a family to support. Because the working class family has a difficult time sustaining itself, the homemaker can afford fewer of the modern conveniences which make housewifery less burdensome. The working class male is often more easily brought to violence within the family because of his economic burdens and his need to demonstrate his masculinity.

The middle class marriage does not place these same burdens on the woman. While the middle class woman can identify her oppression as a woman she is less likely to identify marriage as the cause of women's problems or to call for Feminist Revolution, because she is dependent both financially and emotionally on her husband, and she benefits from that dependence. She has leisure time, social contacts, and is materially provided for.

Single women (most of whom are working class) benefit little from the system and suffer much because they are not male-dependent. They are by far the most likely to join hands and organize the Feminist Revolution.

This is not a glorification of the working class, but simply a statement that the working class has the material base necessary for building a revolution to seize state power. Middle class women will not give up the privileges they enjoy in male society any more than men will give up their power. They will support the status quo until it is obvious that the working class Feminists have organized their power and are posing a serious threat to patriarchy.

B. ABILITY TO ORGANIZE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND MILITARY POWER to overthrow their oppressors and seize state power.

Hypothesis: Working class women are in a position to organize the necessary political, economic, and military power needed to seize state power, while middle class women are not.

Fundamental social change can only occur through revolution. Political reforms within an inherently oppressive system cannot change the power relationships between the oppressor and the oppressed. It is necessary for the oppressed to seize power from their masters.

It takes power to seize power. The oppressor maintains his position through organized political, economic, and military might. The oppressed must organize comparable power to confront and overthrow their oppressors.

1. POLITICAL POWER

Political power is created as the oppressed become more conscious of their enemy and begin to organize in their self interest. It is the expanding consciousness and developing ideology of the oppressed. It is the creation and dissemination of an analysis of the existing system, a vision of a new order, and a strategy for getting from the old order to the new. Political power must provide direction to the economic and military power of the oppressed -- the essential elements in seizing state power. No amount of political power alone can make the existing system topple.

2. ECONOMIC POWER

The system of capitalism is built and maintained on the backs of the masses of people -- men and women. The ruling males have power only so long as the masses of workers continue to produce the goods and services and allow the ruling males to rake off their profits. If the life blood of the system, the wage earner, stopped working en masse, the economic power of the ruling males would be severely threatened.

Through their employment, working class women are in a position to organize economic power to shut the system down. For women in the home, organizing to stop work en masse would affect only the males of the same economic class as the women doing the action. The only direct economic power in the hands of women in the home is control of the means of reproduction of tomorrow's wage earner. The Lysistrata fantasy comes to mind, but to wield this power effectively would require a firm solidarity among women of all classes. Such solidarity is unlikely because of the conflicting interests between women of different classes. Ruling class women are not likely to follow working class leadership because it means sacrificing their men. Nor are working class women likely to follow ruling class leadership because it means giving up the struggle for a classless society. Women cannot unite under leadership that is simply "female," irrespective of class, because class is an integral part of the oppression under which we live.

It is therefore our belief that the most vital economic power which must be organized in order to seize state power is wage earning power -- obviously, this means working class women.

3. MILITARY POWER

Oppressed people must organize in their own self defense to protect themselves from the tyranny of their oppressors. This is the beginning of military power which must eventually be capable of winning victories against the organized might of the ruling males. Without military power there is no hope of seizing power from the oppressors. You cannot confront guns with flowers.

To most women today organized self-defense must seem like an unrealistic dream, as it did to most blacks before John Brown and Nat Turner. It is not only necessary and possible, however, it is inevitable. Once the first women have dared to pose a new reality to women, many more will be able to take the same risks. Organized self defense is, by definition, separatist in nature. It means giving our lives to the struggle for the liberation of our people, and declaring war on males who abuse the rights of women. Working class women will be the first to organize self defense for women because they are the most abused by men. Middle class women will be reluctant to join because they benefit from their marriages. They are affraid that such "aggressive" acts of self defense by women might start a "sex war" which would threaten their relationship with their men. Consequently, they are content to bring about legal reforms in the illusion that liberty can be legislated.

Why does the working class have the greatest revolutionary potential?

II. THE IDEOLOGY OF CLASS

We have explained how we analyze the revolutionary potential of the working class. Now we shall discuss why the ideological leadership of the working class is necessary to build a classless society.

The material condition of people's lives (the work they do, the needs they have, and their ability to meet those needs) determines the outlook (ideology) they have toward the world. For example, the person who has never had to worry about money or how she is going to provide for herself materially can voice the ideology of moral obligation. Her own actions can be pure and moral because the basic needs of her life are being met. The person who is hungry, on the other hand, cannot afford to look at the world in this way. She has to eat. This is what is meant by the "ideology of class." Each class has a different world perspective because of the material reality of their lives.

(continued next page)

We are attempting to understand class ideology in the United States from its material roots. While it is possible to find exceptions to the generalizations we will make about the ideology of both the working class and the middle class, these exceptions do not in and of themselves discount our theory. They simply demonstrate that the American class system is still somewhat fluid and people still believe in its promise of mobility.

How should middle class women relate to a revolutionary struggle?

A. THE IDEOLOGY OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

Hypothesis: Because of the role the middle class plays in the economic hierarchy, they voice an ideology which cannot create a classless society.

1. MANAGERIAL CLASS

The middle class could be called the managerial class. They are the middlemen between the big bosses and the workers, and the professional people who have been given power over others through higher education. While they do not wield the power of the society, they are the instruments of the ruling class, the bosses to the majority of people. Middle class women who are not in these administrative positions share the same world outlook through their marriage. Because they receive status and security as members of the managerial class, their identification is with the bosses and not with the workers. Their ideology justifies their position in the class hierarchy.

2. MIDDLE CLASS SUPERIORITY COMPLEX

As an administrator, professional, or the wife of a member of the managerial class, the middle class woman considers herself superior to the working people involved in production and service. She considers her work (or her husband's) vital and significant and the work of the common person unimportant and menial -- "anyone could do it." She looks down upon the "uneducated" working people and views their ideas as inferior. The middle class shuns the life of the working class: their manners, dress, style of speaking, standards of cleanliness, ways of raising children, and even their music. Country western was considered stupid and sentimental until it became a middle class fad.

Middle class ideology again justifies the middle class position in the class hierarchy. Their superior attitude toward working people makes it impossible for the middle class to create a classless society. Were the middle class to lead a revolution the working class would simply acquire a new master.

3. LIBERAL IDEOLOGY

Perhaps the greatest instrument for justifying the middle class position and maintaining the status quo is liberal ideology. It insists that change must be brought about within the existing system, that reform will solve the great social ills of the society. Liberal ideology does not want to talk "revolution" or "seizing power" or "military organization." It believes in gradualism and evolution. Its proponents do not want to upset the balance of the social order because they benefit from things as they are. Liberal ideology tries to "help the needy" (the social worker mentality). In essence, it supports the institutionalization of a welfare state (guaranteed income, health insurance, etc.). Not having any immediate material needs, the middle class just wants to make a few changes so they can live more comfortably and absolve their social conscience with welfare programs. They attempt to appease discontent and conflict by preaching sensitivity and tolerance among opposing social forces. This ideology ignores power relationships and does not recognize the material base of class and sex differences.

B. THE IDEOLOGY OF THE WORKING CLASS

Hypothesis: Because of their role in the class hierarchy working class women voice an ideology which could create a classless state.

1. PRODUCTION AND SERVICE CLASS

Working class people are involved primarily in production and service work: assembly, construction, office, secretarial, domestic, food service, hospital, etc. Being directly involved in production or service work, they know how things run from the bottom up. They know that their work is basic and contributes directly to meeting the needs of the society. However, they receive little in return for their labor. It is the managerial and ruling class who benefit from the work of the working class. While the working class creates the profits, they have little or nothing to say about where the profits go or what is produced. They have no control over working conditions. Because they are involved in the daily reality of production and service the working class has the material base necessary to overturn the existing system and to create and run a society of, by, and for the people.

2. THE COMMON PERSON

The working class woman is low-person in the hierarchy. She is nobody's boss. She is superior to no one but considers herself equal to all. Working class ideology understands the necessity of real work even though work is shit under the existing system. You clean bathtubs because you know somebody has to and you cook because people have to eat. The common person can readily understand the necessity for thinking and working collectively. She has no superior image to protect, no position to lose in the revolution. She can only benefit by gaining control over her life.

A classless revolution must elevate the position of the masses and return to them control over their own lives. Working class ideology respects the common person and because of this respect is capable of leading a revolution to create a classless state.

3. MATERIALIST IDEOLOGY

Because the working class acts from its experience and sees the world from a materialist perspective they are not taken in by middle class liberal ideology. They look for real solutions to their problems. They don't support liberal reforms because they realize the tax burden is on them. They look for practical solutions that work. In America today the only practical solution is revolution. Working class women are not about to join a social movement involved in bandaging the existing system at their expense. They will move when they see a real alternative that serves their interests and allows them to regain control over their lives. That will be when there is a viable Feminist movement really talking about revolution and seriously organizing to that end.

CONCLUSION

We began this discussion by asking the question, "What is the significance of class to the Revolutionary Feminist struggle?" We have explained why we believe the revolutionary struggle must be led by working class women and that women of all classes must unite under a working class world perspective. Furthur, we believe that the new revoltuionary society must be governed by the dictatorship of working class women. Many Feminists seem to be operating on the assumption that it is possible to move directly from a society where men oppress women to a society where men and women are equal, or that we can move directly from a society where one class oppresses another to a society where all classes are equal. This is impossible. While, without question, our goal is complete equality of all people we must be very practical. People's minds are not changed overnight. Those who benefit from their power as oppressors will not become our equals simply by an exchange of power. It will take time and struggle to clean up the mess and straighten out the twisted minds that male-supremacy has created during its centuries of rule. The ideological struggle that is part of a revolution must continue long after the revolutionaries have seized power. Bad ideas from the old society must be continually struggled with and rooted out. Racism, Classism, and Sexism cannot be tolerated. The dictatorship of working class women means the end of oppressive games for political power among individual men, the end of the politics of the ego. It means the recreation of the matriarchy, the recreation of a society organized to provide for the collective needs of the people, and the beginning of an entirely new era in human history. It will mean that for a time after the seizure of power working class women must control society and rebuild it in their interests. Counter revolutionaries must be deprived of their right to speak and their right to organize in order to insure the success of the revolution. All other people will participate collectively with working class women to build a classless Feminist State.

Men cannot create a Feminist State, they must follow women. Middle and ruling class women cannot create a classless society, they must follow the working class women. The task that clearly lies before us is the building of a powerful Revolutionary-Feminist Movement. Let us move forward.

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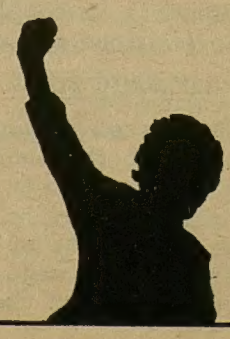


Learning . . . AND UNLEARNING the bullshit

Questions addressed to white, middle class lesbian feminists: How can you believe in a materialist analysis and not dig why/how working class attitudes are not like yours? Can you relate to the contempt and resentment i feel about having a middle class education privilege? That it's not entirely a privilege to feel alienated from people i would have known if i hadn't gone to college? That i can't really "talk the talk" of most of the middle class or most of the working class?

Can you dig that i'll be unreasonably irritated if i hear one more executive's daughter telling how she really respects and loves her father? I could feel sorry for my father 'cause he had no easy life but he was a real prick anyway, to me. Maybe some middle class fathers can afford to be nice to their kids if they can be their real prick selves to other people, for instance the other people they have power over.

How much do you assume that i am the exception? How much do you see the middle class as the rule and not the exception? The majority of people in this country even, are not middle class.

I am sick of trying to write about, listen to, or otherwise concern myself with MIDDLE CLASS GUILT. Not that there hasn't been change; but it's all so slow to me. Now i am seeing more and more the incredible mindfuck of working class guilt--women who identify themselves as "i was raised working class but then i got out and went to school and have all these privileges." And paranoia. And confusion.

I am one of those people. Growing up in a working class family in a working class town, i was told directly and indirectly that i was middle class. Middle class values of middle class aspirations preserved the few middle class attitudes i could develop for future use. After high school alternatives appeared to me; i rejected the ideas of getting married or a "steady job." I was not at all preparing myself for either of those. What was left, besides, would for sure get me away from home and out of that town which i hated because i felt hated there. Two alternatives: go to college or, if i couldn't "make it", join the women's military and learn a skill or get some kind of education there. If i had then, when i was 16 or 17, any political education about the war and the military i might not have considered that life. If i had then more consciousness about my (mostly latent) lesbianism, i might have never applied to college but would have signed up to go where the dykes are.

But since my mother had saved money for me and i got a scholarship (for being poor and deserving) i went to college. There i was surrounded by middle class people who educated me in liberal politics. I imagine the army trip would have been with working class people educating me in reactionary politics--but in a more homosexual community. College sure was heterosexual. The liberal politics were pretty unliberal there. So i spent near 5 years playing liberal middle class heterosexual games.

One and a half years after graduating, i began to realize that i was none of that shit. I am a radical, working class dyke. In a community of the women's movement as it was in 1970, i first identified as a radical--that was okay--then more as a feminist radical/radical feminist. There was support for me in that; it felt right. It was right by middle class feminists. It was increasingly right to be gay--i came out, feeling approved and right by the same women. These changes spanned about 3 or 4 months.

Six months later, living my life in the women's movement, i began to realize that i was working class and that was a whole new "coming out."

The earlier politics of radical lesbianism were written and worked out by middle class dykes. At one time there i actually thought it was a privilege to exist as a radical dyke, saw it as a middle class thing. I felt guilt for spending so much energy (and needing so much energy) in personal relationships with other lesbians while there was so much else that needed our energy. Oppression as a lesbian didn't seem to threaten me economically. Within a community of mostly middle class women where lesbians were respected some, i felt some security. Sometimes i did share in goods from middle class privileges. Is it a privilege to have middle class friends? I think i had options that many working class dykes didn't. And i thought i had some options that i just hadn't checked out, like a well-paid "straight" job that i just hadn't applied for. That option seems more and more of a myth. I have held one well-paid 3-month job that required college education. That's more of a break than a lot of women ever get. But having that education has not wiped out my working class insecurity. I have to work, usually at tedious low-paid jobs.

A middle class education didn't give me middle class confidence or connections. I get scared about lying on job applications, but also scared about telling "them" too much. I'm intimidated by welfare, the phone company, cops, and landlords. When someone says "oh, don't let them hassle you, just do this or that," i feel like i'm so weak and cowardly.

Among the people i want to be with, the radical lesbian community, i feel stronger. A group of middle class lesbians are at least people i can confront with my whole self. For a long time i listened to raps that bothered me and i didn't feel right enough to question or object. Now i'm saying a few things. I recognize what offends me, what i have no tolerance about. A few raps i would like never hearing again from my lesbians sisters: my trip around Europe; my place out in the country; why i just don't want money from my parents because it's a hassle; i can't stand kids; how my shrink really helped me; and various bullshit relating to academics and ultra-individualism. I would feel better about less individuality and more a feeling that i am not unique. And i know my feelings of isolation could hold me down because i'd internalized so much bullshit education. I tried to be intellectual, cool, rational, articulate, artistic; even though i was no success, i accepted those values. I learned to respect and imitate the academic scholar pigs and had no previous distrust or criticism of them to overcome. Of course i also internalized their class chauvinism. I felt superior because i could relate to what they considered worthwhile, or at least i could talk as if i did, and words were all that counted.

These attitudes affected everything i did or thought about; i talked politics, wrote papers about books, read books to learn. Learning meant understanding printed words, not understanding my own experiences. Analyzing did not mean realizing my own feelings. I learned to surpress rather than express my feelings. Or if i expressed anything it was in a learned standard "form"--like writing a poem, writing about my experience in someone else's words, from someone else's point of view.

By that time, i didn't know who i was or what my own perspective was or what my own feelings felt like.

But soon after i got out of college i began to consider that it hadn't been worth much. The University had wasted my time and most of my parents' savings. From then considering it a frivolous education, i came to realize it had been a dangerous education: propaganda, lies, bigotry, false priorities, and an accumulation of trivia. My mind was saturated with this bilgewater and there was no question of passively forgetting it; i would have to actively wipe out those ideas and attitudes and "facts" because i was acting on them. I was a trained agent of the academic pigs, propagating that garbage in all i said. Maybe i would have remained an "agent" if there had been more reward than just a feeling of superiority. My material rewards were not happening. I did not marry a middle class man; i did not find a professional job; i did not get a deal to go to graduate school; i didn't have "connections." In the year after graduating, i worked the same unskilled jobs i had done part-time while i was a student. A BA degree was not security; i felt deceived, cynical, bitter.

Now i am into a long process of unlearning. And i am learning, finally, to learn from experience, to understand my feelings, to accept myself without idealism, and to trust my own judgement. Also i am learning to trust my sisters who are in the same kind of position. We need to be together to build a strong lesbian working class-identified analysis and to help each other struggle against the brainwashing we got in school and in the women's movement.

The following article was originally intended as a verbalization of some ideas I had to be used as a discussion topic in a small group I am part of.

There has been much discussion of this paper in this group. Some of these ideas have become more clear to me. I have had to question some of what I wrote. I would like to give a little background on the Women's Center in Iowa City from my point of view. I was involved in starting the Center (getting the house and funds) and worked there for several months.

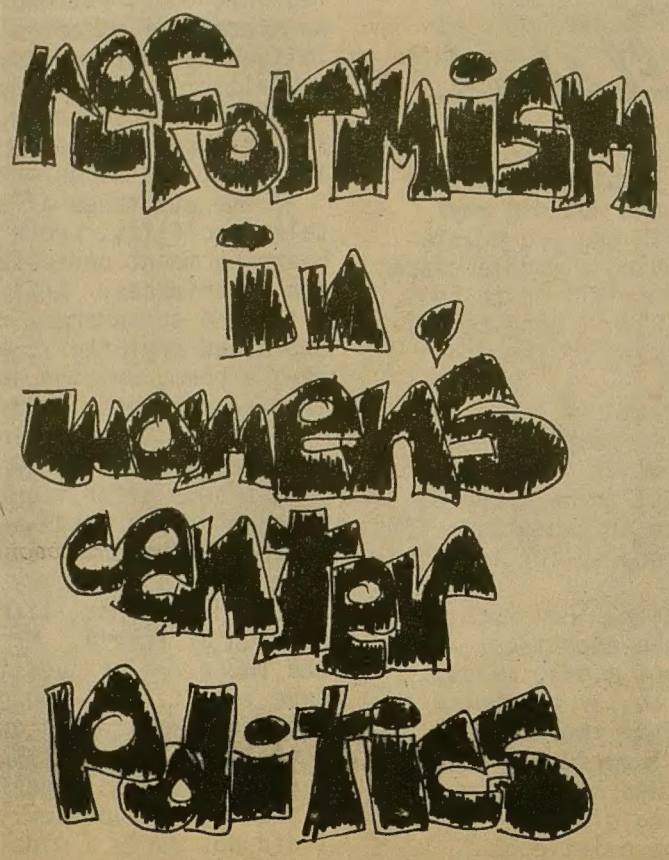
The Center is housed in a University owned building. The majority of funding comes from the University -- some from Student Senate, some from the Student Development Center (a department whose funds come from the administration). In order to receive funds -- especially from the Student Senate -- programs must be well defined and usually justified in terms of helping students.

The Center is run by a Sunday meeting where every group operating out of the Center is supposed to send two representatives. These representatives and any other interested women who come make decisions. These meetings are not well attended. Daily staffing is done by volunteers and a few women who have obtained salaries from different places (work study, Operation Mainstream, etc.) for their work at the Center.

The Women's Center has always said that its doors are open to all women -- just as the Women's Movement has said pretty much the same thing. The Women's Center encourages all women to participate in and start new programs and has never explicitly set up priorities which might exclude some women. But just like in the Women's Movement, the women who have pressing, immediate, material needs have no time to work on "movement" projects. These women probably wouldn't work on most projects anyway because of the lack of understanding the Women's Movement has so far had for the problems of poor, Black and Brown women. And the women who work on the Center continue to be mostly white, middle class, usually college educated women. In this respect, I see the Women's Center as a microcosm of the Women's Movement as it now exists.

I feel the real need for the Women's Center to begin to analyze itself politically in terms of the other parts of a huge system of oppression. And I feel that saying the Women's Center is for all women is ridiculous. Even though the Center does not intentionally exclude some women, it does so by its failure to meet the needs of those women who cannot "relate" to the Center.

I think the Women's Center should either say that it is for white, middle class women or try to set up priorities which emphasize the needs of the more oppressed women in Iowa City.



(The first issue of the Iowa City Women's Center Newsletter reprinted the following quotation from Roxanne Dunbar printed in No More Fun and Games #2.)

"Abstract analysis is important, but people are right to look for specifics. We can offer experiments, some of which we have tried. No one of these problem-solving methods or experiments nor all of them together will constitute the revolution we envision as absolutely necessary for individual as well as group survival (survival of the species).

"It is inhuman and cruel to condemn as 'reformist' anything which eases suffering. It has never been proven that the most downtrodden are the most revolutionary. On the contrary, until women are permitted to develop a human self-image they will never challenge the male structures and assumptions, even when these are leading to world annihilation.

"It is our duty to provide an analysis that is so revolutionary, so inescapably true and humane, that women cannot be co-opted into the system that formerly enslaved them."

There are a few things in the quote from R. Dunbar's article "No More Fun and Games" reprinted in the Women's Center Newsletter that I would like to respond to. I don't intend this to be in any way a critique of the reprint, but more a point of departure for what I would like to discuss about the Women's Center.

I am picking on this quote because I think it generally touches upon several problems I see in the Women's Movement in Iowa City. Not only the content of the quote, but the fact that it was in the Women's Center Newsletter makes it relevant to what I want to say about the Women's Movement in Iowa City. Most of my comments have to be related to the Women's Center because that is what I am most familiar with.

The quote says that it is inhuman and cruel to "condemn" as reformist projects that help relieve suffering. I don't agree. I think that one of the biggest problems existing in the Women's Center is the belief that some of the projects are "revolutionary" because feminists are working on them and exposing women to feminist views. It may be true that women are exposed to feminism through service projects (and non-service projects). But, because I don't think there has been enough analysis of what revolution means in this country in terms of feminism (ie: where feminism fits into a revolutionary movement, what are feminist priorities, etc.), I question what women are and are not "being exposed to." Easing pain is not necessarily (or should I say in and of itself) a revolutionary tactic. Furthermore, the belief that it is can be a stagnating thing. Service projects that ease a situation for an individual or individuals is reformist insofar as it eases the tension of the situation. The projects themselves do not usually alleviate the problem that caused the situation to exist. They not only ease the tension on the individual with the problem, but they also ease tension on the cause of the problem (be it another individual, an institution, a social framework, etc.). A service project can be part of a plan that emphasizes priorities and works for change that is revolutionary, but the projects without such a plan (or clear set of long term goals) are often reformist. They often cover for pig establishments by doing what those traditional establishments won't do. Projects often feed into and contribute to these thereby posing no real threat to the pig establishment.

It is not inhumane and cruel to say that. It is something that needs to be discussed openly and honestly. The term reformist is one way to define something when one believes that it cannot-the way it exists--cause real social change. It should not be taken defensively as I think the word "condemn" implies (in Dunbar's quote) it is being taken. It should be taken seriously. The Women's Movement in Iowa City, as everywhere, needs to discuss its priorities and discuss long range goals. (This has to be done in small groups. Where the Women's Center fits into this I will discuss at the end of this paper.) Then service projects can be discussed coherently (i.e. what is their purpose, how to relate to them, etc.).

An example to emphasize and try to make this more clear is the fact that Black Panther breakfast programs, medical clinics and other service programs are not called "reformist". The Panthers have a clear set of demands and an open policy of what they see as necessary for a complete and thorough revolution in this country. These are clear to everyone working on and benefiting from these projects.

On Priorities

The quote says that it has never been proven that the most downtrodden are the most revolutionary. I think this is a dangerous wave length to be on, especially in a University town. It implies that a revolutionary person is one who has thought through and done reading on what revolution means in this country and has begun to dedicate her life to the struggle for revolution. (To put it in Dunbar's words, has also developed a "human self-image"). If Dunbar's "analysis that is so revolutionary, so inescapably true and humane" is based on "permitting" women to develop a human self-image, I doubt that it will be enough to convince enough people that we need a revolution.

Why do I think this is dangerous thinking in Iowa City? This type of "revolutionary" is easier for a college educated person to become than one who is not well educated. I further think that this type of "revolutionary" is often on the wrong track. To make the conclusion obvious, Iowa City is full of college educated people who often forget that there are some very "downtrodden" in the town.

I am not about to try and "prove" that the statement is wrong. I do think that a very strong argument can be made for saying that the most oppressed people are, at least potentially, "most revolutionary". The more privileges one has, the more one has to lose by a complete revolution. You might say that you don't have all that much (in terms of possessions or financial security). But to one who has less, you have that much more at stake in the society the way it is now; you are that much more to be mistrusted. That doesn't even take into account factors such as race, sex, class, etc. You may not think you are so privileged. But to one who is lower yet on the social scale, you have that much more to lose.

I see revolution very generally as whatever it takes to tear things up until there is a chance for everyone to have at least enough to survive and live comfortably.

Back to Iowa City: I think that a big problem in the Women's Center is that it cannot be what it proposes to be. It cannot run with every woman a part of the collective running of the Center. I agree that ideally it should, but then ideally it shouldn't have to exist. The Women's Center has not, to my knowledge, established its priorities, and until things are more "evened out" there cannot be enough quality even among women to run the center collectively. Obviously I see the establishment of priorities as a necessary step in trying to "even things out". Even then, I see innumerable problems in trying to operate as a collective on such a large scale.

Right now, the Women's Center is run by a small number of women who have the energy, knowledge, resources, love, or whatever other reasons they have to do it. But the center is supposedly "run collectively" (ie: Sunday meetings and volunteer staffing.) I think that it would be better for long range planning and immediate organization if a tight collective of women would take on the responsibility for the overall organization of the Center. They would be available resources for the projects at the Center. I don't think it is wise for members of this collective to be active members of the project groups (at least not the way the groups are now).

The advantages of a small collective would be that it could engage in ongoing discussion of the Women's Movement in Iowa City, revolution and feminism in the U.S., priorities, etc, and it could, by allowing these discussions to guide their work at the Center, make decisions openly taking all responsibility, thereby getting things done effectively.

This suggestion needs more thought, additions, discussion, and it is, of course, useless if the Women's Center still believes that the establishment of priorities is divisive or unfair.

RAPED

Andra Medea
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Dear Person:

Rape is an undiscussed, unstudied, unreasearched subject. We know almost nothing about it because the myths and the misconceptions are so strong that they prevent intelligent, sane inquiry.

We can discover only two books written in this century dealing with rape. One is a sociological study based on 370 rape cases in Philadelphia in 1958 and 1960. The other is a sometimes good, sometimes bad journalistic treatment which focuses primarily on the rapist, not his victim. We are writing a third.

We feel that the most important approach to the subject is one that deals with the victims, women. We need to reach women who have been raped, to have them tell us what happened. It is the only way we know to find out about the nine-tenths of all rapes which are not reported.

We ask you to print this questionnaire, in the hopes that your readers will complete it and mail it to us. We have a publisher. The study will be used. But we need your help to get a large and representative response.

Sincerely,

Andra Medea
Kathleen Thompson

P.S. The book will appear in the spring of 1973.

SEND QUESTIONNAIRES TO: KATHLEEN THOMPSON C/O THE FEMINIST VOICE, P.O. BOX 11144, CHICAGO, ILL. 60611

"Rape (rāp) v.t. The illicit carnal knowledge of a woman without her consent, effected by force, duress, intimidation, or deception as to the nature of the act."
Webster's New International Dectionary
Second Edition, Unabridged

AGE____RACE____HEIGHT____WEIGHT____

RESIDENCE: CITY_____STATE_____

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN RAPED?_____

HOW MANY TIMES? _____

HAVE YOU EVER SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDED YOURSELF AGAINST RAPE?_____HOW?_____

_____

_____

_____

FOR EACH RAPE OR RAPE ATTEMPT OF WHICH YOU WERE THE VICTIM, PLEASE FILL OUT ONE COPY OF THE FOLLOWING.

AT THE TIME OF THE RAPE:

AGE____HEIGHT____WEIGHT____

RESIDENCE: CITY_____STATE_____

OCCUPATION_____MARITAL STATUS_____

ATTACKER WAS:

AGE____HEIGHT____WEIGHT____

OCCUPATION_____MARITAL STATUS_____
(If Known)

DID YOU KNOW YOUR ATTACKER(S):

NOT AT ALL____BY SIGHT____

ACQUAINTANCE____FRIEND____

DATE_____RELATIVE_____

LOVER(husband)_____EX-LOVER(husband)____

OTHER (explain)_____

WHERE DID THE ATTACK OCCUR?

YOUR HOME____HIS HOME____

INSIDE(other than above)____

STREET____ALLEY____

IN A CAR____COUNTRYSIDE____

OTHER(explain)_____

WERE THERE OTHER PEOPLE AROUND?_____

AT ABOUT WHAT TIME DID IT OCCUR?_____

WERE YOU PERSUADED INTO A DANGEROUS SITUATION AND IF SO, HOW?_____

_____

_____

_____

IF YOU WENT TO COURT, DID YOU FEEL THAT YOU RECEIVED JUST TREATMENT?_____

BRIEFLY, GIVE US SOME IDEA OF HOW YOUR LIFE WAS AFFECTED BY THE RAPE(attempt).

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

DID ANYONE OR ANYTHING HELP YOU AFTERWARDS TO DEAL WITH THE RAPE IN YOUR OWN MIND?

_____

_____

_____

WHAT KIND OF FORCE WAS USED?

WEAPON_____HITTING_____

THREAT_____OF WHAT_____

BEATING_____OVERPOWERING_____

OTHER_____

DID YOU RESIST?____HOW?_____

_____

_____

WHAT WAS THE ATTITUDE OF YOUR ATTACKER?

HOSTILE_____CONTEMPTUOUS_____

ANGRY_____FRIGHTENED_____

MATTER OF FACT_____RIGHTEOUS_____

OTHER(explain)_____

DID YOU REPORT IT TO THE POLICE?_____

WHAT WAS THEIR REACTION?_____

WAS THERE AN ARREST?_____

WAS THERE A CONVICTION?_____

A Woman? August 18, 1972

AIN'T I A WOMAN? IS A PUBLICATION REFLECTING ONLY THE OPINION AND STRUGGLE OF A SMALL COLLECTIVE OF RADICAL GAY WOMEN- NOT THE WHOLE GAY/ WOMEN'S COMMUNITY IN IOWA CITY.

the furies

lesbian/feminist monthly

published by the Furies Collective
P.O. Box 8843, S.E. Station, Wash., D.C. 20003 202-544-3940

the anti-mass

had a terrible typo! CORRECTION: Chapter 9, "Self-Activity," paragraph 1, the last sentence should read

"We talk revolution but act reactionary..."

Also, on page 15, paragraphs 2 and 3 should be reversed.

(The pamphlet Anti-Mass was printed in Volume 2, # 9.)

WHY THIS ISSUE IS LATE... Iowa City has had two flash floods in the last month or so, and our office was under water. We lost alot of production materials, precious volumes of back issues, a large portion of our library and furniture. Also, the delay has resulted in a bottleneck in the mailing of orders and correspondence. We still have to re-locate and re-organize, so we ask you to bear with us, and to help us out if you can, it's been a hard-licks birthday.

AIAW?

new books from the feminist press

ELIZABETH CADY STANTON by Mary Ann B. Oakley
"Thorough, accurate, witty, and eminently readable ... A necessity for anyone interested in women's history. *$1.50* *--Robin Morgan*

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Aint I A Woman?

complete volume (# 1 or #2) available for $2.75. overseas subs are $13.00. Regular subs still $5, inst. $20.

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AIAW? is on file...

at the:
International Women's History Archive
2325 Oak ST.
Berkeley, Calif.
94708

and is available on microfilm through:
Bell + Howell
Drawer "E"
Wooster, Ohio

OUR PRINTING POLICY

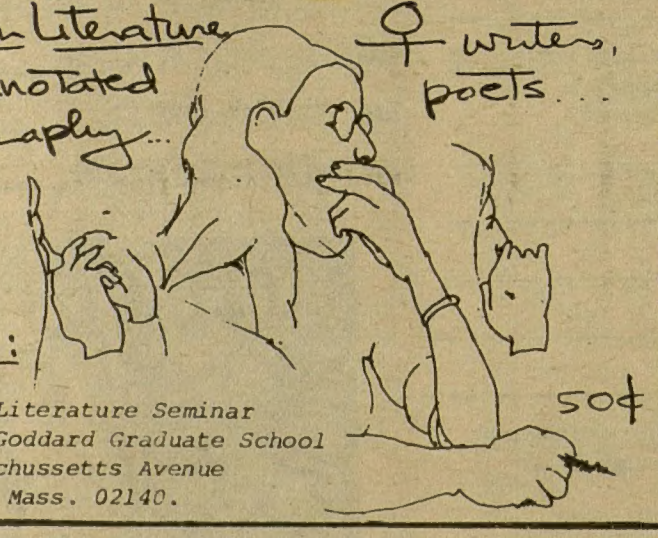
The AIAW collective makes all decisions on what we print. We try to print articles that we agree with, and as a whole, have the paper represent the politics of the collective. We do, however, decide at times to print material submitted to us that we may have some disagreements with, but that we basically think are helpful and worth reading. We do not edit any articles, but sometimes we don't feel right about printing certain articles without commenting or responding to them in the paper to make our own views clear. If we wish to do that we will communicate privately with whoever submitted it to be sure it's all right. To designate what articles come from outside, we have started signing AIAW on collective articles and articles by individuals from the collective.

People keep writing us nice letters and we want to print them. It would save us a lot of time if you would indicate whether or not you want us to print it. We never use anyone's name unless we know she wants us to.

-AIAW?

Women in Literature
an annotated bibliography...

♀ writers, poets...



write:

Women and Literature Seminar
Cambridge-Goddard Graduate School
1878 Massachussetts Avenue
Cambridge, Mass. 02140.

50¢

"The Alternative Readers Service wishes to announce that the first issue of the Froggie Hollow Gazette, a six hour tape is now available for free, to the blind, visually handicapped and functionally illiterate.

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We need lots of publicity. The group of people we hope to reach is not presently part of any organization so we must depend on readers of the underground press to turn their blind friends on to our service. We would appreciate a small continuing spot in your paper. We would be estatic with a free subscription and could perhaps work out an exchange."

Alternative Readers Service
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Cleveland, Ohio 44106
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AIN'T I A WOMAN?
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